

Film school project funded

Cap U receives \$30 million

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CAPILANO University will get a modern, green building to house its successful film program following the unveiling Wednesday of \$30 million in funding for the project.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the federal government will contribute \$14.29 million as part of its Knowledge Infrastructure program, with the province picking up the rest of the bill.

The university will start work on a design for the new film school almost immediately, said Capilano University president and vice-chancellor Greg Lee. When finished, the 70,000-square-foot film centre will stand

See Design page 10

Design work to start on building

From page 1

in the northern portion of the North Vancouver campus. It will allow the university to consolidate its animation and film programs in a single purpose-built, LEED-certified building. The programs are currently languishing in 30-year-old wooden portables.

"We'll certainly have better delivery of the film program and it will allow us some modest expansion as well," Lee said.

Capilano's School of Motion Picture Arts is already the largest film school in Western Canada and serves 400 students each year. Lee noted that the film and television industry is worth more than a billion dollars to the provincial economy.

In making the announcement, Lee thanked the federal and provincial governments for making the project happen and praised local politicians including North Vancouver MP Andrew Saxton and MLAs Jane Thornthwaite, Naomi Yamamoto, Ralph Sultan and Joan McIntyre for their "continued and much-appreciated support."

"It's a terrific day for Capilano, North Vancouver, and for the province," said Saxton. "This is really going to put us on the map for motion picture arts and film studies. It will create jobs during construction, and also in the long term we'll have more homegrown talent working on these productions."

Capilano was passed over during an earlier round of infrastructure spending, but Saxton said he was confident Ottawa would come through eventually.

After meeting in January, North Shore business leaders named the film school as one of three priorities for government spending. The others, upgrades to Low Level Road and the Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Crossing, have already been funded.

The Knowledge Infrastructure program will distribute \$2 billion to upgrade education buildings across the country. It is a component of the larger federal economic stimulus plan.